

Lions Clubs International

Fact Sheet

Membership

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with 1.4 million members in 44,600 clubs in 188 countries and geographical areas.

Lions are men and women who volunteer their time to humanitarian causes. Founded in 1917, the association's motto is "We Serve."

Service To Others

Worldwide, Lions clubs are recognized for their service to the blind and visually impaired. This service began when Helen Keller challenged Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness" during the 1925 Lions Clubs International Convention.

Today, Lions extend their commitment to sight conservation through countless local efforts, as well as through their international SightFirst Program and Lions World Sight Day, a global partnership of United Nations agencies, eye care and philanthropic organizations and health professionals, held the second Thursday of each October to increase awareness of the need to eradicate blindness. Lions also collect and recycle eyeglasses for distribution in developing countries year-round and especially during May, which is Lions Recycle for Sight Month.

In addition, Lions make a strong commitment to young people through youth outreach programs. Lions also work to improve the environment, build homes for the disabled in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, support diabetes education, conduct hearing programs and, through their foundation, provide disaster relief around the world.

Based on a recent report of Lions clubs worldwide, it is estimated that each year Lions clubs donate approximately US\$722 million and 71 million hours, which is equivalent to 34,000 people working full time for a year.

Sight Programs

In 1990, Lions established SightFirst, a US\$143.5 million global initiative to fight the major causes of preventable and reversible blindness. The unprecedented program joins Lions volunteers with blindness prevention experts and organizations and governments. SightFirst has:

- provided more than 3.2 million cataract surgeries
- built or expanded 136 eye hospitals
- treated more than 36 million people to prevent river blindness
- improved eye care in dozens of countries around the world.

Lions clubs support other sight-related activities. Lions clubs and members:

- provide 600,000 free professional glaucoma screenings and make 25,000 corneal transplants possible each year
- establish and support a majority of the world's eye banks, hundreds of clinics, hospitals and eye research centers worldwide
- collect more than 5.2 million pairs of unwanted eyeglasses annually, for free distribution to those in need in developing countries
- offer screenings, eyeglasses and sports goggles to athletes through the Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes Program
- provide free quality eye care, eyeglasses, Braille-writers, large print texts, white canes and guide dogs for thousands of people each year.

Founded: 1917

Motto: "We Serve"

Members: 1.4 million

Clubs: 44,600 clubs in 188 countries and geographic areas

Convention: June 30 - July 4, 2003, Denver, Colorado, USA

International Headquarters:
Oak Brook, Illinois, USA



Lions Opportunities For Youth

Second only to Lions' commitment to aiding the blind and visually impaired is their dedication to serving young people.

Lions Youth Outreach

Lions' comprehensive programs challenge young people to learn, achieve and serve by focusing on volunteerism and other opportunities for healthful development.

- "The Future Is Ours...So Now What?" - This education unit includes a video designed to motivate youth to volunteer in their community.
- Lions-Quest - Lions clubs sponsor life-skills/substance abuse and violence prevention curricula in schools. The programs teach young people the skills needed to resolve conflicts peacefully, say no to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and grow into healthy and responsible adults.

Leo Clubs

Lions clubs in 139 countries sponsor 5,600 Leo clubs. The 140,000 Leo members, ages 12-28, perform community service activities and support a worldwide environment project.

International Youth Exchange

Each year, thousands of young people, ages 15-21, learn about other cultures while staying with Lions host families in countries around the world.

International Youth Camps

Camps in 39 countries bring together youth from many nations to enjoy educational, recreational and cultural activities.

Lions International Peace Poster Contest

Each year more than 325,000 students, ages 11-13, from more than 60 countries, express their ideas about world peace through artwork, which is judged at local, regional, national and international levels. One grand prize and 23 merit award posters are recognized.

Service Activities

Other Lions activities include:

- reducing blindness caused by diabetic retinopathy through diabetes education, early detection and treatment programs and support of research
- conducting hearing projects, including newborn hearing screenings and providing hearing aids
- combating pollution of water, air and land
- improving international relations through assistance projects, exchange programs and health missions to the developing world, often in conjunction with the United Nations and other organizations.

International Foundation

Lions Clubs International Foundation is the charitable arm of Lions Clubs International. The foundation's mission is to support the efforts of Lions clubs around the world in serving their local and global communities by funding humanitarian service projects.

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We Serve